

## **Costa Mesa police officers conduct compliance checks**

The Costa Mesa Police Department collaborated with the [Orange County Probation Department](#) last week to conduct compliance checks on offenders subject to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), per the State Prison Realignment Assembly Bill 109.

These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within the City of Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of OC Probation.

Officers completed 27 residential home checks of offenders and contacted 43 individuals, 23 of which were and classified as PRCS/Probation offenders and five of which were on formal probation with gang terms.

The compliance checks resulted in eight offenders being arrested for violations of the conditions of their probation and/or new criminal law violations, and two other individuals being cited for having an open container in public.

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## **Man Arrested For Robbery After Pepper Spraying Victim Before Fleeing With Stolen Goods**

Costa Mesa Police Department officers arrested Matthew Chima Udechukwu Tuesday after he met a stranger under the guise of

purchasing goods but instead pepper sprayed the victim in the face before fleeing with stolen property.

At about 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, officers responded to a report of a robbery that had just taken place. The 18-year-old male victim was selling a pair of designer shoes that he had advertised on a resale app, and Udechukwu had met with the victim to purchase the shoes. After inspecting the shoes, it is suspected that Udechukwu pepper sprayed the victim in the face, incapacitating him, and fled on foot with the stolen shoes.

Costa Mesa officers quickly connected the suspect to a similar, previous incident that occurred on May 12, 2017. At about 12:48 p.m., officers had responded to the parking lot on the 1700 block of Adams Avenue, to take a report from a 24-year-old male victim, who was selling a backpack.

The suspect in that incident had pepper sprayed the victim in the face before fleeing the scene with the victim's backpack. During the investigation into that first incident, officers identified Udechukwu and obtained a search warrant for the suspect's home, which officers served after the second incident.

At approximately 1 p.m. on Tuesday, officers went to Udechukwu's residence at the 2700 block of Mesa Verde Drive East and established a perimeter and observation of his apartment. Detectives subsequently arrived with the search warrant and after knocking on the door with no response and knowing the suspect was home, entry was forced into the apartment and Udechukwu was taken into custody for two counts of robbery.

All stolen property was recovered during the search.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information or who believes they have been a victim is encouraged to contact Detective Chamness at (714) 754-5197.

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## Man accused of molestation and peeping of Eastside Costa Mesa residents pleads guilty

Costa Mesa resident Jeffrey Robert Smith pleaded guilty on Friday May 12, to multiple criminal charges that included burglary, peeping, molestation and indecent exposure.

Costa Mesa police officers arrested Smith in July of 2015 after being alerted to a naked male found by residents on their porch of their apartment complex. Costa Mesa Police Detectives had been investigating Smith, since May of 2015, for several cases involving sexual battery, burglary, indecent exposure, peeping, prowling and trespassing. Those earlier cases all occurred during early morning hours on the Eastside of Costa Mesa.

In late April of 2015, Smith had been arrested for failing to register as a sex offender with Costa Mesa, and he was sentenced to 60 days in jail. Approximately one month later, in May, Smith was arrested in Costa Mesa for battery and trespassing charges. In early July, Smith was arrested for failing to register as a sex offender with Costa Mesa, however, upon formal review of the case by court staff, he was subsequently released from custody.

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# CMPD joins OC Sheriff and Costa Mesa and County fire for training exercise at South Coast Plaza

The Costa Mesa Police Department, Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue, Orange County Sheriff's Department, Orange County Fire Authority and the Orange County Crime Lab conducted a routine training exercise on May 9, 2017, at South Coast Plaza.

The training exercise is part of a strategic multi-agency plan to stay updated on best practices and mitigate future large-scale incidents with required inter-operational cooperation.

South Coast Plaza officials offered their location, which was chosen by law enforcement for its size and accommodation to carry out a major proactive effort.

The training exercise took place in the evening with various facets of three emergency scenarios put together to improve technique and coordination between all agencies involved. No further information will be provided in regards to the training exercise in order to protect law enforcement and emergency services tactics and operational strategy.

"Police work and emergency response is ever evolving, and it's important that we keep up with the times and improve our techniques," said CMPD Chief Rob N. Sharpnack. "I would like to thank everyone involved for all their attention to such an important training and South Coast Plaza for graciously allowing us to use their location."

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# Costa Mesa and Santa Ana police seek two men who reportedly have scammed two elderly victims

The Costa Mesa Police Department (CMPD) and the Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD) are seeking the public's help in identifying two men suspected of scamming two elderly victims on two separate occasions, in the Cities of Costa Mesa and Santa Ana.

On April 11, 2017, at approximately 1:20 p.m., two suspects approached an 84-year-old Santa Ana resident on the street. The victim was convinced to go to a bank on Main Street and make a withdrawal from his own bank account. The two men are suspected of then taking the victim's money and fleeing the scene.

On April 28, 2017, at approximately 10:30 a.m., the same suspects from the previous Santa Ana incident approached a 68-year-old Costa Mesa resident as he is walking home and started a conversation with the victim. The two men are suspected of convincing the victim into a car and driving him to his bank on Harbor Boulevard. They are further suspected of convincing the victim to withdraw money from his bank account and took the money from him. The two suspects then dropped off the victim in the same neighborhood before fleeing the scene.

These two suspects are known to loiter around banks and bus stops near banks.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information regarding this is encouraged to contact CMPD's Det. George Maridakis at (714) 754-5051 for incidents in Costa Mesa, and SAPD Robbery Unit Det. Cpl. A. Silva at (714)

245-8545 for incidents in Santa Ana.

**Descriptions:**

Suspect 1: Male, Hispanic, 50-60 years old, 5'06"-5'07" tall, 150-160 lbs., brown eyes, gray hair, missing teeth (in photos).

Suspect 2: Male, Hispanic, 50-60 years old, 6'00"-6'02" tall, 160-170 lbs., gray hair, brown eyes, and broken teeth (no photo available).

Vehicle: late model Gold American sedan, possible Ford Taurus.



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**Costa Mesa Police Department**

# unveils Coyote Management Plan with tracking tool

The Costa Mesa Police Department held a Town Hall meeting Tuesday April 25 to launch the first round of a new Coyote Management Plan to educate the public about ways to prevent and report coyote encounters.

“The key to mitigating coyote encounters is much like reducing crime,” said Capt. Mark Manley, who oversaw the plan’s creation. “It takes a partnership that starts with the community and links up with a comprehensive Coyote Management Plan.”

Costa Mesa Police Lt. Victor Bakkila, California Department of Fish & Wildlife Lt. Kent Smirl, and University of California’s Dr. Niamh Quinn answered questions and addressed concerns. The plan is modeled after other similar plans within Orange County and has three main components including education and prevention, coyote hazing, and the reporting of coyote encounters.

The City has launched a [Coyote Information Page](#) where residents can get information about the [Coyote Management Plan](#) and report sightings and encounters [here on the Coyote Cacher](#).

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# New Coyote Management Plan to be discussed at Town Hall

## **this Tuesday April 25**

The Costa Mesa Police Department will be holding a town hall meeting on Tuesday, April 25 from 6 to 8 p.m. in City Council Chambers to unveil the City's new Coyote Management Plan.

Speakers will include members of the Police Department, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and a coyote researcher from the University of California.

City and Police Department staff have also produced a new video about coyotes that will be shown that evening.

The management plan includes a new mobile website for the self-reporting of coyote activity, a new Police Department coyote hotline and a community training program.

The experts will also provide a detailed explanation of coyote behavior and strategies the community can employ to mitigate the frequency of coyotes within City neighborhoods.

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## **Costa Mesa Police Department recognizes 19 for their performance and service to community**

The Costa Mesa Police Department honored its top performers in 2016 at the annual Employee Recognition Breakfast on Thursday April 6 at The Crossings church.

With Sgt. Clint Dieball officiating as Master of Ceremony, the



department paid tribute to 19 officers, including those who received Employee of the Year in their category, six who received Life Savings Award and seven who earned the Case of the Year Award.

In addition, the department honored South Coast Metro Business Alliance as this year's Community Partner.

"The men and women of the Costa Mesa Police Department make every effort to perform their duties in a competent, courteous and professional manner," Chief Rob Sharpnack said as he addressed the crowd gathered for breakfast.

The breakfast was attended by Mayor Katrina Foley, City Manager Tom Hatch, Assistant City Managers Tammy Letourneau and Rick Francis and by fellow officers and family members.

"Frequently, many of our department members exceed the expectations of the public in the performance of their duties," Sharpnack said. "Today, the Costa Mesa Police Department recognizes identified personnel, as voted on by their peers, for their exemplary performance and service to our community."

The awardees included William "Bill" Knowles for Volunteer of the Year, Citlaly Gomez for Explorer of the Year, Park Ranger Lorna Lyttle for Civilian of the Year, Records Supervisor Lidian Estecoc for Civilian Supervisor of the Year, Sgt. Jerry Souza for Sworn Supervisor of the Year and Det. Jose Morales for Officer of the Year.

Officers John Elliott, Jeremy Hermes, Gloriosio Manigbas, Tyrus Ranck, Erick Ransdell and Jared Shurley were bestowed with Life Saving Awards for their efforts in resuscitating victims.

The Case of the Year went to the core team who worked on the Sudweeks Cold Case Homicide Investigation. Those members of the department who were honored included Lt. Paul Beckman, Sgt. Stephanie Selinske, Detectives Jose Morales and Jason Chamness, CSI Investigator Kimberlee Guluzian, Crime Scene Specialist Sara Nguyen and Police Aide Nicole Diaz.

“Your collective efforts led to the identification of the suspect after a 20-year period,” Chief Sharpnack said. “The culmination of this investigation has also provided much-needed closure for the Sudweeks family as they have had to carry the weight of this cold case for 20 years.”

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## **UPDATE: Costa Mesa Police announce missing autistic boy Diego Garcia has been found**

The Costa Mesa Police Department is searching for a 12-year-old autistic boy, Diego Garcia, who went missing from the 1200 block of Adams Avenue in Costa Mesa.

He was last seen by his parents last night, April 4, 2017, at approximately 9:00 p.m.

It is believed that he might have been spotted by an OCTA bus driver in area of South Coast Drive and Harbor Boulevard at about 3:30 a.m. this morning.

The boy has long black hair, possibly in a ponytail, is

wearing a red T-shirt, blue pajama pants and blue tennis shoes.

Anyone with information on his whereabouts is asked to please contact Detective Sevilla at 714.313.2784.

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## **CMPD steps up enforcement for St. Patrick's Day**

As part of the Costa Mesa Police Department's (CMPD) continued commitment to reducing injury and fatalities caused by impaired drivers, CMPD's Traffic Unit will deploy additional officers on special DUI Saturation Patrols Friday, March 17, 2017, to stop and arrest drivers showing signs of alcohol or drug impairment.

In addition to this St. Patrick's Day enforcement effort, all police, sheriff deputies, and the CHP will be on heightened alert ready to stop and arrest any impaired driver throughout the long weekend. St. Patrick's Day is a popular holiday to celebrate and party.

Unfortunately, too many people are taking to the roads after drinking, making this holiday one of our most dangerous. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 252 people lost their lives in drunk driving-related crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period from 2011 to 2015. More than a fourth of them were killed in drunk driving crashes that occurred in the early morning, post-party hours between midnight and 5:59 a.m.

That is why CMPD and the California Office of Traffic Safety are teaming up to reach all drivers with an important life-

saving message and warning: “Don’t drive impaired by drugs or alcohol.”

If you plan to celebrate this St. Patrick’s Day, follow these tips to stay safe:

- Before celebrating St. Patrick’s Day this year, decide whether you will drink or you will drive.
- If you are planning on driving, commit to staying sober.
- Drugs such as prescription medications, marijuana, or illicit drugs can also lead to impairment and unsafe driving, leading to a DUI. When mixed with even a small amount of alcohol the affects can be compounded.
- If you have been drinking, you have many choices to get home safely. You can call a taxi, sober friend, or family member. You also have the option to use public transportation or a location-based app used to purchase a ride through a private driver.
- Download the Designated Driver VIP free mobile app, “DDVIP,” for Android or iPhone. The DDVIP app helps find nearby bars and restaurants that feature free incentives for the designated sober driver, from free non-alcoholic drinks to free appetizers and more. The feature-packed app even has social media tie-ins and a tab to call Uber, Lyft, or Curb.
- Help those around you be responsible. Walking while impaired can put you at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.

This enforcement effort is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the NHTSA, who reminds everyone to be alert and “report drunk drivers – call 911” immediately if you see a dangerous driver!

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# February City Manager Leadership Award goes to police records veteran Sandra Lozano

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Costa Mesa Police employee Sandra Lozano with this month's City Manager Leadership Award at the Thursday Feb. 23 Meet and Greet event at City Hall.

"Sandra exemplifies our commitment to provide the highest levels of service to the residents of Costa Mesa," Hatch said. "She is a leader and dedicated employee not only amongst her peers in the Police Department but for the entire city organization."

A Police Records and Evidence Administrator, she oversees the Records and Evidence Bureau, consisting of both the Records and the Property and Evidence units. These are two major areas of responsibility, which are critical to the Police Department's daily operations.

Lozano's leadership style is based on communication, regular interaction with staff and mentoring. She is also part of the department's Peer Support Program, where she is regularly sought by individuals for her approachability, input, guidance, or council, Hatch noted. Additionally, her commitment and efforts put into matters behind the scenes is unmeasurable, he said.

Out of her many accomplishments, one of the more notable ones is her work as the department's SunGard Administrator, responsible for the City's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS). Lozano has been involved with the system since 2013 and has been critical to the system's implementation and development since then.

A 12-year Costa Mesa employee, Lozano previously worked for the Whittier Police Department, where she served over 14 years and achieved the rank of Records Supervisor. She graduated with honors from the University of La Verne, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management. She has also been the recipient of the Costa Mesa Police Department's Civilian of the Year Award for 2008 and Supervisor of the Year Award for 2015.

In addition to honoring Lozano, City Manager Hatch welcomed several new employees and commended one for a promotion.

Joining the city in the Parks and Community Services Department is Jennifer Crisol – Recreation Leader II, Claude Garrett – Recreation Leader II, Sierra Grindstaff – Recreation Leader I, Tyler Hoang – Recreation Leader II, Gabriela Lopez – Recreation Leader II, Tyler Palmer – Recreation Leader II and Jodie Mccann the department's new Management Analyst

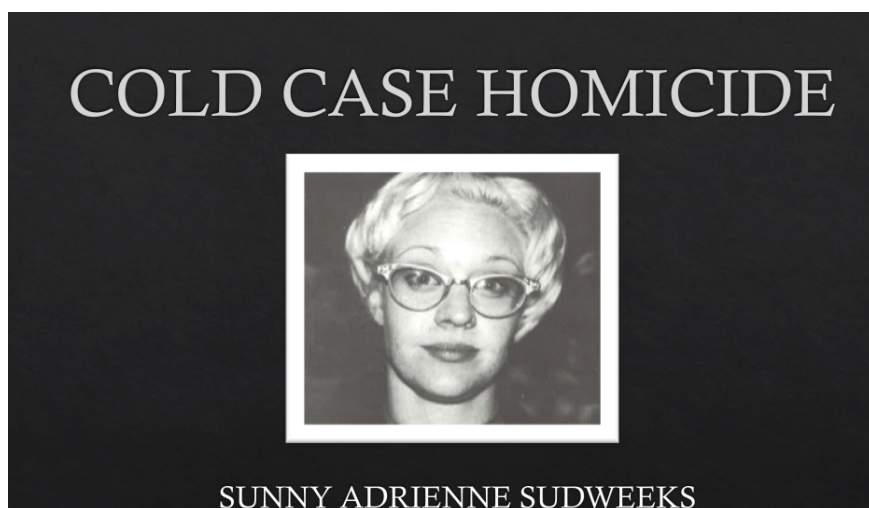
From the Police Department, Hatch welcomed new Officer Erik Nippert, a recent Sheriff Academy graduate as well as Isai Flores Barrera, a Public Services intern.

He also congratulated Kelly Dalton on his recent promotion to Engineering Technician III.

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# Costa Mesa Police announce they have suspect in 20-year-old murder-rape cold case of OCC student

The Costa Mesa Police Department in a press conference Thursday morning identified the suspect in the 1997 cold case rape-murder of 26-year-old Sunny Adrienne Sudweeks.



The identity of the suspect has been unknown until recently and after extensive follow-up investigation and exhausting all avenues to capture the suspect, CMPD hopes to bring the suspect to justice by making his identity known.

Felipe Vianney Hernandez Tellez, 43, has been identified as the homicide suspect who raped and murdered Sudweeks in 1997.

Click [here for a Spanish language version](#) of the press release.

CMPD was assisted in this investigation by the Orange County Cold Case Task Force, the Orange County Crime Lab, the Orange County District Attorney's (OCDA) TrackRS Unit, U.S. Marshals Service, Santa Ana ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations

Unit, Santa Ana School Police, and the California Department of Justice.

“While we can never make up for the loss associated with this heinous and vile crime, my hope is that we can provide some sense of closure and make life a little easier for the Sudweeks family,” said Chief of Police Robert N. Sharpnack. “My staff worked hard to get to this point but we will not stop until this despicable individual is behind bars.”

### **Felipe Vianney Hernandez Tellez**

At the time of the murder, Hernandez, then 23 years old, was living in Santa Ana but had previously lived in Costa Mesa from approximately 1991 to 1993.



Two years prior to the murder, Hernandez was arrested on Dec. 4, 1995, by Newport Beach Police Department and his fingerprints were collected. He was subsequently charged and convicted of second-degree burglary.

He was also arrested on May 20, 2000, by the Santa Ana Police Department and subsequently charged and convicted for domestic violence. His fingerprints were placed in the fingerprint database in 2000.



In 2006, Hernandez fled the United States, and returned to Mexico. It is believed that he currently lives somewhere in the state of Oaxaca with his new family to include his wife and three children. He is possibly living near the resort town of Puerto Escondido. He previously worked as a painter and currently delivers rotisserie chickens to customers. Hernandez frequents his mother's home in Huitzuco, Guerrero.

### **Murder of Sudweeks**

Sudweeks was a 26-year-old photography student at Orange Coast College and worked part-time at an Aaron Brothers. At the time of the murder, she was living with her boyfriend and a roommate, who both worked night shifts as cab drivers.

On the night of Feb. 22, 1997, Sudweeks was home in her upstairs apartment in the 1000 block of Mission Drive in Costa Mesa. That night, she had several phone conversations, and evidence shows that her last conversation with a girlfriend took place around 11:00 p.m.

On Feb. 23, 1997, between 12:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., it is believed that Hernandez entered Sudweeks' upstairs apartment where the victim was sleeping in one of the three bedrooms and raped and murdered Sudweeks by strangling her. It is believed that Hernandez then subsequently fled the scene.

Sudweeks' boyfriend and roommate returned early that morning to find Sudweeks' body lying in her bed. Her boyfriend immediately called 911. At approximately 4:55 a.m., CMPD officers and detectives arrived at the scene and began their investigation.

Click [here to see a slideshow](#) from the press conference.

### **Investigation and Identification of the Suspect**

Over the course of the initial investigation, CMPD collected over 130 DNA samples and 265 pieces of evidence. They

canvassed the area and conducted extensive interviews, passed out police bulletin fliers, and distributed a press release regarding the murder. A month after the homicide, fingerprints from the crime scene were input into the fingerprint database but returned no match. The DNA sample that was collected returned a profile but no name in the DNA database. With no leads to pursue, the case went cold.

Between 1997 and 2009, CMPD conducted due diligence reviews of the case file but found nothing new to advance the case.

In 2009, the case was reviewed due to new developments in DNA technology. CMPD and then-Deputy District Attorney Camille Hill, who specialized in DNA, conducted a DNA review. The case remained cold with no leads to a suspect.

Between 2010 and 2016, CMPD routinely reviewed the case file. In 2011, 2012, and 2014, the suspect's DNA was run in a state database for a familial match but no match was made.

In November 2016, Parabon NanoLabs provided CMPD with a detailed "Snapshot Prediction Results Composite Profile" including physical identifiers of the suspect such as a facial composite, skin color, eye color, hair color, freckles, sex, and ancestry. Around that time, CMPD ran fingerprints in the fingerprint database, which returned a hit to Hernandez from a prior arrest and conviction. With that promising lead, CMPD focused on Hernandez and pulled his 2000 booking photo. The snapshot provided by Parabon NanoLabs and the booking photo of Hernandez were strikingly similar.

In January and February 2017, CMPD detectives conducted interviews of Hernandez's family members and obtained DNA from a relative. Both the relative's DNA and the DNA collected from the 1997 crime scene were tested and returned with a high likelihood that the relative and the perpetrator who killed Sudweeks were related. The investigation, including DNA and fingerprints, led CMPD detectives to believe that Hernandez is

the suspect that raped and murdered Sudweeks.

CMPD will submit the case to the OCDA for charges and will continue to work with law enforcement partners to locate Hernandez and extradite him back to Orange County to face justice.